

## Traditional Polish Easter Basket

A *swieconka* basket typically contains the following, each with a symbolic meaning:

**Masło** [Butter]: Often shaped into a lamb (*Baranek Wielkanocny*), reminding us of the goodness of Christ that we should have toward all things. Sometimes a cake will be shaped like a lamb too.

**Chleb** [Bread]: symbolic of Jesus, the Bread of Life.

**Babka** [Easter Bread]: A special round loaf topped with a cross.

**Chrzan** [Horseradish]: Symbolic of the Passion of Christ still in our minds, but sweetened with some sugar because of the Resurrection. May be white or red - the red is known as "*Cwikla*" and is made with grated red beets.

**Jajka** [Eggs]: Have always been considered as a symbol of the resurrection and the emergence of a new life. Easter eggs can be colored or decorated (often with the symbols of Easter, of life, of prosperity). They are the favored object of Polish national art and are known as "*pisanki*."

**Kielbasa** [Sausage]: A spicy sausage of pork products, indicative of God's favor and generosity and the abolishment of the kosher rules of the Old Law.

**Szynka** [Ham]: Symbolic of great joy and abundance. (In addition to the large ham cooked for the Easter Meal, often a special small ham, called the *Szynka Wielkanocny* is purchased specially for *Swieconka* basket.)

**Slonina** [Smoked Bacon]: A symbol of the over abundance of God's mercy and generosity.

**Sól** [Salt]: So necessary an element in our physical life, that Jesus used its symbolism: "You are the salt of the earth."

**Ser** [Cheese]: Shaped in a ball, it is the symbol of the moderation Christians should have.

**Woda Swiecona** [Holy Water]: Holy water is used to bless the home, animals, and fields and is used in religious rituals throughout the year.

**Swieca** [Candle]: often marked like the Paschal Candle lit during the Easter Vigil, is inserted into the basket to represent Christ, Light of the World.

**Pieprz** [Pepper]: Similar symbolism to the Horseradish, and also, with salt, hospitality.

**Ocet** [Vinegar]: Symbolizes the gall given to Christ at the crucifixion.

**Wino** [Wine]: Symbolizes the blood of sacrifice split by Christ at the crucifixion.

**Olej z oliwek** [Olive Oil]: A substance with much religious use and symbolism in the Sacraments.